

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

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S E C R E T AMMAN 4065

EXDIS

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON FROM PICKERING

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MASS, JO, US, SA

SUBJECT: JORDAN AIR DEFENSE -- PRESS LEAKS

REF: (A) STATE 190465, (B) STATE 190917

1. WHEN I MET WITH KING HUSSEIN AUGUST 4, I RAISED WITH HIM NEAR THE END OF THE MEETING THE QUESTION OF US PRESS LEAKS. SINCE SUCH LEAKS HAVE BEEN TREATED IN VERY LOW KEY IN JORDAN, I WAITED UNTIL NEAR THE END OF MY MEETING BEFORE DISCUSSING THEM.
2. I TOLD THE KING THERE HAD BEEN INFORMATION IN THE US PAPERS WHICH HAD COME FROM LEAKS BUT HAD NOT REPEAT NOT BEEN AUTHORIZED BY US. I FELT WE WERE CONTINUING TO MAKE PROGRESS WITH THE SAUDIS IN TRYING TO WORK OUT THE TECHNICAL DETAILS OF THE FUNDING AND THAT THE RECENT STATEMENT OF THE JORDANIAN PRIME MINISTER HAD ADEQUATELY REFLECTED THE SITUATION. HOWEVER IF HE WANTED TO ISSUE HIS OWN COMMUNIQUE TO THE ARMED FORCES, THAT WAS A DECISION FOR HIM TO MAKE HOWEVER WE STILL FELT IT BEST TO HANDLE THE PROBLEM DISCREETLY AND HOPED THAT HE WOULD STAY IN CLOSEST TOUCH WITH THE SAUDIS IN CONNECTION WITH ANYTHING HE PROPOSED TO DO.

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3. KING DID NOT SEEM BOTHERED BY QUESTION OF LEAKS.

HE TOLD ME HE HAD DECIDED ON THE BASIS OF OUR ADVICE NOT TO ISSUE A COMMUNIQUE NOW. HE HAD BEEN ORALLY BRIEFING HIS OFFICERS AS HE MADE TRIPS AROUND THE COUNTRY ABOUT THE STATUS OF THE DAL IN ORDER TO INSURE THEY KNEW WHERE MATTERS STOOD. HE HAD ALSO BRIEFED SAUDI OFFICER COMMANDING SAUDI FORCES IN JORDAN, MAJOR GENERAL ESH-SHIEKH, ON WHAT HE WAS DOING WITH HIS OWN FORCES. SAUDI HAD ALSO BEEN GIVEN A FULL BRIEFING ON RECENT JORDANIAN DISCUSSIONS WITH SYRIANS ON SITUATION IN LEBANON. SAUDI HAD CARRIED THIS INFORMATION TO PRINCE FAHD ON SATURDAY JULY 31.

4. KING ALSO SAID THAT HE WILL BE LEAVING ON FRIDAY, AUGUST 6, ON A TRIP TO SAUDI ARABIA AND THE GULF. HE WILL ALSO FILL IN HIS SAUDI COLLEAGUES ON WHAT HE IS DOING HERE IN TERMS OF BRIEFING HIS FORCES ON THE AIR DEFENSE DEAL. HE UNDERSTANDS THAT US-SAUDI DISCUSSIONS ARE STILL CONTINUING AND ARE IN A DELICATE STAGE.

5. KING TOLD ME THAT UNFORTUNATELY HE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO VISIT QATAR AND THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES ON THIS TRIP BECAUSE THEIR RULERS WILL NOT BE IN COUNTRY. HE IS SKEPTICAL ABOUT MAKING ANY PROGRESS ON OBTAINING ANY BUDGET FUNDS FROM KUWAIT, BUT NEVERTHELESS WILL GO THERE AND PLANS TO RETURN TO JORDAN ON TUESDAY, AUGUST 10. KING TOLD ME ALSO HE IS SENDING RIFAI TO MOROCCO WITH A MESSAGE TO KING HASSAN ON NOT BEING ABLE TO PROVIDE 20 AIRCRAFT FROM THE JORDANIAN AIR FORCE TO MOROCCO AS ORIGINALLY PROMISED BECAUSE OF SITUATION IN THE AREA.
PICKERING

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